

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 072305
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARP:JWTWINAM:LB

APPROVED BY NEA:SSOBER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T STATE 072305

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MASS, KU, UR

SUBJECT: GOK PURCHASE OF SOVIET MISSILES

REFERENCES: (A) KUWAIT 1592, (B) TEHRAN 2771, (C) LONDON
5100

1. WE HAVE CONSIDERED YOUR THOUGHTFUL COMMENTS ON KUWAITI
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DECISION TO BUY FROG AND STRELLA MISSILES FROM SOVIETS AND
SHARE YOUR CONCERN THAT THIS KUWAITI ACTION HAS POTENTIAL
FOR ADVERSELY AFFECTING GULF STABILITY. WE HAVE CONSIDERED
POSSIBILITY OF MAKING A COORDINATED US/UK APPROACH TO
KUWAIT, AND INCLUDING THE FRENCH IN THIS UNDERTAKING, AS
WELL AS ALTERNATIVE OF APPROACHING SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN
ON THE SUBJECT. SUBJECT TO COMMENTS FROM ADDRESSEES WE DO

NOT FEEL MUCH WOULD BE GAINED FROM BRINGING IRANIANS OR FRENCH INTO THIS QUESTION. WE RECOGNIZE THAT ANY US AND UK APPROACHES WHICH APPEAR TO KUWAIT TO BE COORDINATED WOULD HAVE DETRIMENTAL ASPECT OF SEEMING TO BE A GANG UP BY WESTERN POWERS TO PRESSURE KUWAITIS. WE HAVE ALSO CONSIDERED PROBABILITY THAT SAUDIS, LONG AWARE OF AND CONCERNED ABOUT LIKELIHOOD OF KUWAITI PURCHASES OF SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT, HAVE ALREADY WEIGHED IN WITH KUWAITIS AND BEEN REBUFFED OR DECIDED NOT TO DO SO FOR FEAR OF BEING IGNORED.

2. WE HAVE ALSO CAREFULLY CONSIDERED LIMITATIONS ON OUR OWN ABILITY TO INFLUENCE KUWAITI DECISIONS BILATERALLY AS WELL AS THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE ALREADY INFORMALLY MADE EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATIONS TO GOK DEFENSE MINISTER. NEVERTHELESS, WE CONSIDER INTRODUCTION OF WEAPONS SUCH AS FROG AND STRELLA INTO KUWAIT SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUS FROM THE STANDPOINT OF INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL THAT WE WISH YOU TO APPROACH GOK TO MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS, INDICATING THAT YOU ARE DOING SO UNDER INSTRUCTIONS:

-- USG IS DISTURBED TO LEARN THAT GOK HAS DECIDED TO PURCHASE FROG AND STRELLA MISSILES FROM SOVIET UNION;

-- AS GOK AWARE, USG DOES NOT REGARD A SOVIET MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH KUWAIT OR OTHER GULF STATE AS HELPFUL TO THE PROSPECTS FOR THE SECURITY AND POLITICAL STABILITY OF THE REGION. AT THE SAME TIME, USG RECOGNIZES FULLY KUWAIT'S SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO DEAL WITH WHOMEVER IT
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WISHES IN MEETING ITS DEFENSE NEEDS.

-- IN THIS CASE, HOWEVER, OUR BROADER CONCERN IS WITH THE TYPE OF WEAPONS INVOLVED RATHER THAN THE FACT THAT THEY ARE OF SOVIET ORIGIN.

-- WE CONSIDER STRELLA A DANGEROUS WEAPON IN EVENT IT SHOULD FALL INTO TERRORIST HANDS. WE CONSIDER FROG A SOPHISTICATED, ESSENTIALLY OFFENSIVE WEAPON. USG IS NOT PREPARED TO SELL WEAPONS OF THIS TYPE IN THE AREA AND WOULD NOT WISH TO ENCOURAGE ANY OTHER COUNTRY TO DO SO.

-- AS GOK AWARE, IN JUSTIFYING PAST U.S. SALES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO KUWAIT, WE HAVE STATED OUR BELIEF THAT KUWAIT IS SEEKING ONLY TO MEET DEFENSIVE NEEDS AND IS NOT ENDEAVORING TO ACQUIRE EQUIPMENT WHICH COULD BE USED FOR OFFENSIVE PURPOSES. THE PURCHASE OF WEAPONS SUCH AS FROG WEAKENS THIS ARGUMENT.

-- USG FEELS THAT THE INTEREST WE SHARE WITH KUWAIT AND KUWAIT'S MODERATE NEIGHBORS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE SECURITY AND POLITICAL TRANQUILITY OF THE GULF WOULD BE SERVED BY KUWAIT'S REVERSING ITS DECISION TO PURCHASE

FROG AND STRELLA.

3. FOR LONDON AND JIDDA: BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO SHARE WITH YOUR HOST GOVERNMENTS INFORMATION KUWAITI REFTEL AND GENERAL LINE WE INTEND TO TAKE IN MAKING DEMARCHE TO GOK. IN SO DOING, HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT USG HAS NO INTENTION OF SEEKING TO REPLACE SOVIET UNION AS SUPPLIER OF SUCH WEAPONRY TO KUWAIT OR ANY OTHER STATE IN THE REGION AND WOULD NOT WELCOME ANY OTHER COUNTRY'S STEPPING IN TO SUPPLY SUCH WEAPONS. WE ARE NOT REQUESTING THAT EITHER UK OR SAG WEIGH IN WITH KUWAIT ON THIS SUBJECT BUT OBVIOUSLY
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WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTIONS SHOULD THEY DECIDE TO DO SO INDEPENDENTLY.
CHRISTOPHER

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